

Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities into National Service

Recruiting Guide for Nebraska AmeriCorps* State Programs



AMERICORPS

Corporation for
NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE



Provided by the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission and the Munroe-Meyer Institute AmeriCorps Program

**Nebraska Volunteer
Service Commission**
serve your neighbor • serve your community • serve your country

Munroe-Meyer Institute



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Why Recruit Individuals with Disabilities?

Congratulations! By reading this packet you are taking the first step in a very important movement in National Service: the Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities. People with disabilities are joining the world of service in increasing numbers. Just like their able-bodied counterparts, they see a need in their communities and want to contribute to creating a better world. All programs receiving funds from the CNCS and other federal agencies must comply with federal laws that guarantee equal access and prohibit discrimination. In addition to ensuring compliance with federal law, your organization can benefit tremendously from the employment of individuals with disabilities!

Benefits to your Organization

There are many benefits to organizations choosing to employ persons with disabilities, including:

- **Increased Productivity:** A number of international studies have demonstrated that employees with disabilities have attendance, punctuality and productivity levels, equal to, if not better than able-bodied employees.
- **Accumulated skill sets:** By retaining staff that are disabled you hold on to accumulated skills experience and commitment.
- **Enhanced Staff Morale:** Staff morale and commitment to the company has been found to increase among all employees when a company makes a visible commitment to employing a person with a disability.
- **Increased Customer Loyalty:** As with staff morale, benefits have been noticed at a customer level. Customers respond favorably towards organizations, which are positive towards disability and reflect the diversity of the community. This also promotes a more positive image of the business from a public relations perspective.
- **Workplace Diversity:** All employees of your organization can benefit from working with individuals of different backgrounds and ability levels.
- **Community Recognition:** Employing workers with developmental disabilities often also brings community support. Mark Regan of Boston Market Corporation says that the dining room attendants with disabilities who are employed to help clear tables and offer drink refills have prompted many customers to vow their support of Boston Market.

Source: Graphite Human Resource Management- Ready, Willing and Able- An Employers guide to hiring people with disabilities. June '02

What is a disability?

There are many definitions of a disability. Some definitions focus on medical conditions, while others focus on the functional limitations that result from disability. Different federal and state laws and programs use different definitions. There are many people who have medical conditions that are disabling, but that does not necessarily mean that they meet the definition of “disability” that is laid out in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and in the Americans with Disabilities Act. To be protected by these federal laws, an individual must meet the definition described in the law.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, a person with a disability is one who:

1. Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or
2. Has a history of such an impairment; or
3. Is perceived or “regarded as “having such impairment, even when the impairment does not exist.

There are some important components to this three-part definition.

The phrase major life activities means functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Substantially limits means unable to perform a **major life activity**, or significantly restricted in the condition, manner, or duration it can be performed, when compared to most people in the general population. The determination that a disability **substantially limits** an individual in performing major life activities is made on a case-by-case basis. It is not based merely on the existence of a condition (a physical or mental impairment), but on the impact of that impairment on an individual’s ability to perform major life activities.

The definition of disability considers the impact of the impairment. There is no comprehensive list of protected disabilities because there are so many conditions that can result in disability. Also, impairment for one person may substantially limit a major life activity, while someone else may not be substantially limited. Determinations must be made on a case-by-case basis

Source: Inclusion: Creating an Inclusive Environment: A Handbook for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities into National and Community Service Programs; www.serviceandinclusion.org.

Examples of Disabilities

Disability is as unique a human characteristic as hair color or personality type. The degree to which a disability impacts a person's life ranges from slight to significant. In some instances a person's disability is invisible; in other instances, a person may have more than one disability. As a result, creating a list on the types of disabilities is difficult. Nonetheless, we want to give you some idea of the wide range of disabilities.

- **AIDS:** stands for "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome". AIDS is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). AIDS is the final and most serious stage of HIV disease, in which signs and symptoms of severe immune deficiency develop.
- **Blind/Visual Impairment:** Blind refers to a total loss of vision. Visual impairment indicates partial sight.
- **Chemical Sensitivity:** A reaction to environmental chemicals like cleaning supplies, smoke and/or perfumes.
- **Congenital Disability:** A physical impairment existing since birth.
- **Deaf/Hard of Hearing:** Deaf refers to a total loss of hearing. Hard of hearing refers to partial hearing loss ranging from slight to severe.
- **Developmental Disability:** Any mental or physical disability that develops or occurs before a person's 22nd birthday that continues indefinitely and in some instances substantially limits self-care, language, learning, mobility, self-direction, independent living or economic sufficiency.
- **Epilepsy:** Term for various disorders marked by electrical disturbances of the central nervous system and typically manifested by seizures, which are involuntary muscular contractions.
- **Learning Disability:** A disability affecting spoken or written language.
- **Mental Illness/Mental Disability:** A psychiatric disability caused by a biological, physiological or psychological disorder or a chemical disorder of the brain.
- **Mental Retardation/Cognitive Disability:** Condition causing significantly below-average intellectual functioning.
- **Motor Disability:** Includes multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, Lou Gerhig's disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, ALS), cerebral palsy. A group of conditions resulting from damage to the central nervous system.
- **Paralysis/Spinal Cord Injury:** Hemiplegia affects full or partial paralysis of one side of body caused by brain damage as a result of a disease, trauma or stroke. Paraplegia is a paralysis of lower half of body. It involves partial or total loss of function of both legs. Quadriplegia is paralysis of the body that involves partial or total loss of function in a person's arms and legs.
- **Speech Impairment:** Limited or difficult-to-understand speech patterns.

For more information on types of disabilities, visit <http://www.disabilitiesonline.com/> or contact one of the many support groups or national disability organizations that represent a specific disability group.

Source: Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois; <http://www.silcofillinois.org>

Where to Start?

The *first step* in a good recruiting campaign begins with a well-written position description! This allows candidates to review the position and determine whether or not it is a good fit for their abilities and interests.

Writing Inclusive Service Descriptions

Service Description Template

Service Position Title	Indicate title and whether a full- or part-time position.
Immediate Supervisor/Title	List name and/ or title.
Service Position Summary	Briefly describe the responsibilities of the position in a narrative format.
Essential Functions of Position	List all basic duties that must be performed with or without reasonable accommodations. Identify only the tasks essential to the position. Focus on function, not "how to's." For example, if the essential function is to get from A to B to conduct training, do not say driving or a driver's license is required.
Marginal Functions of Position	List additional duties that are preferred, are re-assignable to others, or can be eliminated or otherwise do not change the nature of the position.
Principal Working Relationships	Identify internal and external working relationships required for successful accomplishment of responsibilities.
Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities	Identify the specific areas of knowledge and abilities required to be qualified for the position, as well as any required skills.
Academic and Experience	List minimum qualifications and

Qualifications

experience required to be eligible for the position. Do not include “nice to have’s.”

Service Conditions

Identify the conditions under which the position must be accomplished. For example, service is to be performed in a classroom, or service is performed primarily outdoors, or service involves travel outside the state.

Physical, Emotional, and Intellectual Demands

Identify the degree to which these Demands are applied to the requirements of the position. An example of an emotional demand might be: Patience is required because of work with children with cognitive disabilities. An example of an intellectual demand might be: Duties include extensive research and analysis of data.

Equipment Used

List the types of tools and equipment used in this position.

Other than completion of marginal functions, the above functions may Be completed with or without accommodations. This description lists the Minimum duty requirements.

Source: Inclusion: Creating an Inclusive Environment: A Handbook for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities into National and Community Service Programs; www.serviceandinclusion.org.

Writing Advertisements

Recruiting individuals with disabilities means writing advertisements which encourage them to apply. Your advertisements should contain the following phrase:

“Individuals with disabilities strongly encouraged to apply.”

The following is an example of an advertisement written to target individuals with disabilities:



JOIN AMERICORPS!



The Munroe-Meyer AmeriCorps program, a program serving and supporting children with disabilities, is accepting applications for a

Bi-Lingual Interpreter

Job Responsibilities:

- Provide translation in Pediatric Dentistry Clinic for Spanish-speaking patient
- Provide brochure/document translation services for Munroe-Meyer's Media Department
- Participate in monthly training
- Assist with the planning and implementation of volunteer events

Requirements:

- Previous experience translating in a clinical setting
- Certification preferred
- Excellent customer service skills

**To apply contact:
Mandy Volkmer, Project Coordinator**

avolkmer@unmc.edu

402.559.5762

Individuals with Disabilities Strongly Encouraged to Apply. MMI AmeriCorps is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

This material is based upon work supported by the National and Community Service under AmeriCorps Grant No. 03AFHNE001.

Nebraska Recruiting Resources

To advertise your positions, consider contacting the following Nebraska agencies. Many will help you advertise positions, arrange interviews, and help prepare applicants for the interview process!

League of Human Dignity

Lincoln
1701 P St.
Lincoln, NE. 68508
(402) 441-7871 V/TDD

Norfolk
400 Elm Ave
Norfolk, NE. 68701
(402) 371-4475 V/TDD

Omaha
5513 Center St.
Omaha, NE. 68106
(402) 595-1256 V/TDD

Southwest Iowa
1417 1/2 W. Broadway
Council Bluffs, IA 51501
(712) 323-6863 V/TDD

Vocational Rehab

Columbus
402-562-8065
877-505-0866 Toll Free
vr_columbus@vocrehab.state.ne.us

Kearney
2916 West 24th Street.
Kearney, NE. 68845
308-865-5343
800-262-3382 Toll Free
vr_kenarney@vocrehab.state.ne.us

Grand Island
3335 West Capital Ave.
Grand Island, NE. 68803
308-385-6200
800-862-3382 Toll Free
vr_grandisland@vocrehab.state.ne.us

Lincoln
5143 So. 48th Street
Lincoln, NE. 68516-2299
402-471-3231
402-471-6341 TDD
800-472-3382
vr_lincoln@vocrehab.state.ne.us

Norfolk
1212 Benjamin Ave
Norfolk, NE. 68701
402-370-3200
800-442-3382
vr_norfolk@vocrehab.state.ne.us

North Platte
200 So. Silber, Building #2
North Platte, NE. 69101
308-535-8100
800-272-3382
vr_northplatte@vocrehab.state.ne.us

Scotts Bluff
1517 Broadway, Suite 131
Scotts Bluff, NE. 69361-4939
308-632-1321
800-292-3382
vr_scottsbuff@vocrehab.state.ne.us

South Sioux City
901 West 21st Street. Suite 1
South Sioux City, NE. 68776
402-494-2265
877-659-7899
vr_southsioux@vocrehab.state.ne.us

Omaha
1313 Farnam on the mall
Omaha, NE. 68102
402-595-2100
402-595-2107 V/TT
800-554-3382
vr_omaha@vocrehab.state.ne.us

Workforce Development

Chadron Career Center
250 Main St.
Chadron NE. 69337-2356
308-432-6121
308-432-6129 fax

Scotts Bluff Career Center
1717 Ave. C
Scotts Bluff, NE. 69361
308-632-1420
308-632-1414 fax

Alliance Career Center
302 Box Butte Ave.
Alliance, NE. 69301-3342
308-763-2935
308-763-2936 fax

Sidney Career Center
927 23rd Ave
Sidney, NE. 69162-6937
308-254-6937
308-254-6916 fax

North Platte Career Center
306 East 6th Suite 140
North Platte, NE. 69101
308-535-8320
308-535-8085 fax

Lexington Career Center
1308 North Adams
Lexington, NE. 68850
308-324-2064
308-324-6320 fax

Holdrege Career Center
502 East Avenue. 2nd Floor
Holdrege, NE. 68949-0073
308-995-5627
308-995-5321 fax

McCook Career Center
220 West 1st St
McCook, NE. 69001-3601
308-345-8470
308-345-8471 fax

Kearney Career Center
124 West 46th St. Suite 106
Kearney, NE. 68847-8348
308-865-5404
308-865-5407 fax

Grand Island Career Center
1306 West 3rd Street
Grand Island, NE. 68801
308-385-6300
308-385-6029 fax

Lincoln
1010 "N" St.
Lincoln, NE. 68508
402-471-2275
402-471-9776 fax

Nebraska City
905 Third Corso
Nebraska City, NE. 68410-0700
402-873-3384
402-873-3552 fax

Norfolk Career Center
105 East Norfolk Ave. Suite 100
Norfolk, NE. 68701
402-370-3430
402-370-4431 fax

Fremont Career Center
406 East 6th Street.
Fremont, NE. 68025-5136
402-727-3250
402-727-3264 fax

Omaha Career Center
2421-23 North 24th St.
Omaha, NE. 68110-2282
402-444-4700
402-444-3755 fax

Hastings Career Center
2727 West 2nd Street
Hastings, NE. 68901-4663
402-462-1867
402-462-1896 fax

York Career Center
510 Lincoln Ave.
York, NE. 68467-2997
402-362-5891
402-362-5901 fax

Beatrice
5109 West Scott Rd. Suite 413
Beatrice, NE. 68310
402-223-6060
402-223-6088 fax

Falls City
1705 Stone Street
Falls City, NE. 68355-2653
402-245-4401
402-245-4402 fax

West Point Career Center
539 Decatur
West Point, NE. 68788
402-372-5749
402-372-9776 fax

Omaha Career Center
5404 Cedar St.
Omaha, NE. 68106-2365
402-595-3000
402-595-3051 fax

Quality Living Inc.

Quality Living
6404 North 70th Plz.
Omaha, NE. 68104
402-573-3700
402-573-3790 fax

Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired Statewide offices

Kearney
906 East 25th Street.
Kearney, NE. 68847-4603
308-865-5441
308-865-5440 fax

Lincoln
4600 Valley Rd. Suite 100
Lincoln, NE. 68501-4844
402-471-2891
402-471-3009 fax
877-809-2419 Toll Free

Omaha
1313 Farnam
Omaha, NE 68102-1836
402-595-2041
402-595-1008 fax

Norfolk
214 North 7th St. suite 11
Norfolk, NE. 68701-4083
402-370-3436
402-370-3508 fax

North Platte
200 So. Silver
North Platte, NE. 69101-4298
308-535-8170
308-535-8054 fax

Scotts Bluff
4500 Ave. I
Box 1500
Scotts Bluff, NE. 69363-1500
308-632-1304
308-632-1313 fax

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Lincoln
4600 Valley Rd. Suite 420
Lincoln, NE. 68510-4844
402-471-3593 V/TTY
402-471-3067 fax
800-545-6244 V/TTY
lstaff@ncdhh.state.ne.us

Omaha
1313 Farnam on-the-mall
Omaha, NE. 68102-1836
402-595-3991 V/TTY
402-595-2509 fax
877-248-7836 V/TTY
ostaff@ncdhh.state.ne.us

North Platte
200 South Silber room 207
North Platte, NE. 69101-4298
308-535-6600 V/TTY
308-535-8175 fax
888-713-3118 V/TTY
npstaff@ncdhh.state.ne.us

Helpful Interviewing Tips

Before An Interview:

Understand that you are not hiring a disability. You are interviewing a person with skills and abilities. Let the applicant present him/ herself in the best possible light. For example:

- The employer should make sure that the interview location, including the rest room, is accessible.
- Offer assistance to an applicant who is blind or has limited use of his/her hands if you require him/her to fill out forms.
- Provide an interpreter for an applicant who is deaf.
- Offer detailed or specific instructions to an applicant with cognitive disabilities.
- Do not let a rehabilitation counselor, social worker or other third party take an active part in, or sit in on, an interview unless the applicant requests it.
- Make sure you have in-depth knowledge about the essential job functions for positions
- Concentrate on the applicant's technical and professional knowledge skills, abilities, experiences and interests-not on his/her disability.

At the Interview:

- Do treat the applicant as you would any other adult-don't be patronizing.
- Do offer to shake hands.
- Do ask job related questions such as "How would you perform this particular task?"
- Do get on the same eye level with the applicant
- Do ask an applicant what prior job duties he or she has performed
- Do be patient, and repeat directions as necessary.
- Don't ask questions concerning information not on the individual's application form

- Don't ask about visible physical characteristics or their health status.
- Don't ask if the applicant has a psychiatric disability, a history of having a psychiatric disability, or if he or she has consulted with a psychiatrist
- Don't ask questions about past drug addiction
- Don't ask "What happened to you?" or "How will you get to work?"
- Don't ask questions in terms of disability, such as "Do you have a mental condition that would preclude you from qualifying for this position?"
- Don't ask "How often will you require leave for treatment of your condition?" However, you may state the organizations attendance requirements and ask if the applicant can meet them.
- Don't ask the applicant "Will you need accommodations?" or "What kind of accommodations will you need?" It is the applicants responsibility to request accommodations
- Don't offer assistance without first asking
- **You may ask an individual with a readily apparent disability (such as an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing), how he/she will perform a specific task.**

You may conduct an employee physical, if:

- The medical exam comes after you offered employment to the applicant
- All potential employees in the job category also get physicals.
- You keep the medical information separate from the personnel file.

Remember any question you ask must directly relate to someone's ability to do the job!

Disability Etiquette

Using Words with Dignity

There are a few general rules of etiquette people should use when talking to or about someone with a disability.

Use “people first” language. Examples: Person with a disability, not a disabled person. Use person who is blind, not a blind person.

Disability is the current acceptable term, not handicap. The word handicap comes from cap-in-hand. In other words, a beggar. That is definitely not how people with disabilities want to be seen.

Talking to a Person with a Disability

Here are some tips to follow:

Communicating with People with Disabilities

- Speak directly rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter who may be present
- When introduced to a person with a disability offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands. Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting
- Always identify yourself and others who may be with you when meeting someone with a visual disability. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking
- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen or ask for instructions.
- Treat adults as adults. Address people with disabilities by their first names only when extended that same familiarity to all others. Never patronize people in wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder
- Do not lean against or hang on someone’s wheelchair. Bear in mind that people with disabilities treat their chairs as extensions of their bodies.
- Listen attentively when talking with people who have difficulty speaking and wait for them to finish. If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers, or a nod of the head. Never pretend to understand: instead repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.
- Place yourself at eye level when speaking with someone in a wheelchair or on crutches

- Tap a person who has a hearing disability on the shoulder or wave your hand to get his or her attention. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to establish if the person can read your lips. If so, try to face the light source and keep hands, cigarettes and food away from your mouth when speaking.
- If a person is wearing a hearing aid, don't assume that they have the ability to discriminate your speaking voice.
- Never shout at a person. Just speak in a normal tone of voice.
- Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions such as "See you later" or "Did you hear about this?" that seem to relate to a person's disability
- Remember that people with disabilities are just as interested in the baseball scores and other topics as people without disabilities.
- Use a normal speaking tone and style. If someone needs you to speak in a louder voice they will ask you to do so.
- Remember that people with disabilities, like all people, are experts about themselves. They know what they like, what they do not like and what they can and cannot do.
- Choose words that carry non-judgmental connotations and that are accurate descriptions.

Source: Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois; <http://www.silcofillinois.org>

Written Communications

When writing about someone with a disability, portray them as you would anyone else-with all the same human strengths and weaknesses as their non-disabled peers. Never refer to people with disabilities as “disabled” simply to accommodate design layouts. **Creating inclusive work environments begins with the correct terminology!**

Terminology

Do Not Use:

- Handicap
- The handicapped
- Victim
- Invalid
- Crippled with or spastic
- Paralytic
- Stricken with
- Birth defect-inflicted or afflicted by, deformed
- Poor or unfortunate
- Deaf and dumb/deaf mute
- Normal (acceptable only for quoting statistics)
- Confined to a wheelchair/wheelchair bound

Use:

- Physically disabled
- Person with a disability
- Person who has...(name disability)
- Person with...(name the disability)
- Person who had (name the illness)
- Person with...(name the disability)
- Person who had polio

Terminology (cont...)

- Person with...(name the disability)
- Person with a physical disability
- Person who is paralyzed
- Caused by ...(name cause)
- Disabled since birth
- Born with... (name the disability)
- Deaf person
- Person who uses (name the device)
- Person who walks with (name the device)
- Non-disabled (referring to non-disabled persons as normal insinuates that disabled persons are abnormal)

Talking about Disability Benefits and AmeriCorps

Some candidates you speak with may receive disability benefits from Social Security Insurance, the Social Security Administration, and Nebraska Medicaid. It is important that they know their benefits could be affected by the allowable monthly living stipend.

When interviewing, discuss the salary range and benefits with the candidate. They may take that information to their caseworkers to determine if and how benefits may be affected.

If the candidate is selected, the AmeriCorps Corporation has designated Easter Seals of Nebraska to assist AmeriCorps members in benefits planning. Your new AmeriCorps member may choose to contact this organization to discuss potential benefits implications.

Easter Seals Society of Nebraska
Michelle Earnst
2727 W. 2nd Street
Suite 471
Hastings, NE 68901
402-462-3013 ext 2

Further information is available to Program Directors on the National Service Inclusion Project website: www.serviceandinclusion.org under Frequently Asked Questions/National Service Benefits and Federal Aid.